

Opposition to freeway route grows

By Doug Murphy
Staff Writer

The Ahwatukee Foothills Village Planning Committee will hold a special meeting next month for a single agenda item – a motion opposing construction of the Loop 2-2 South Mountain Freeway along Pecos Road.

The anticipated outcome will be the latest addition to a growing string of vocal opposition from officials and grass-roots organizations.

Two months ago the Phoenix Parks and Recreation Board passed a motion opposing the freeway cutting through a corner of South Mountain Park.

“We are very opposed to it,” board chairwoman Diana Brooks said.

The board also suggested that the Arizona Department of Transportation look at an alternate route, including the Gila River Indian Community.

Congressman J.D. Hayworth wrote ADOT in November 2005 opposing the Pecos Road route and urging the no-build option.

Phoenix City Councilman Greg Stanton has also gone on record opposing Pecos Road as a route for the freeway, going so far as to it would be built “over my dead body.” He has consistently urged negotiations with the Gila River Indian Community.

A grass-roots group was also formed a month ago. Protecting Arizona Resources and Children (PARC) is circulating petitions opposing Pecos Road as a route. They also have a Web page (www.protectazchildren.org) with air quality and health information regarding the freeway’s impact.

The ultimate decision on the freeway route will be made by ADOT and the Federal Highway Administration with input from affected groups, citizens, local governments and elected officials.

A final decision on the freeway’s route and whether it will be built is not expected until the end of the year or early in 2007.

The reporter can be reached at (480) 898-7914 or by e-mail at dmurphy@aztrib.com.